

CPS Human Resource Services

COOPERATIVE TESTING VENTURE (CTV) CLERICAL SKILLS TEST STUDY GUIDE



Introduction

This study guide has been designed to help you prepare for the Cooperative Testing Venture (CTV) Clerical Skills test.

We suggest that you get the “feel” of the exam. Study the information given here about the examination process and content. The sample questions contained in this book will give you the “feel” because they are similar to those you will find on the test.

In addition to information about the examination process, this guide includes the following:

- General Test Preparation Information
- General Strategies for Taking Written Examinations
- Examination Content Overview
- Sample Test Questions

Note: The words *test*, *exam*, and *examination* are considered the same throughout the guide as are the words *questions* and *items*. The term *proctor* refers to the person giving the test.

**If you have any questions regarding this examination, you may contact
CPS Human Resource Services
241 Lathrop Way
Sacramento, CA 95815
Telephone: (916) 263-3624 ext. 3080**



General Test Preparation Information

Following is information to help you study for the written examination Cooperative Testing Venture Clerical Skills test.

- Do some work every day in preparation for the examination. Budget your time; set aside a definite study period for each day. Begin concentrating as soon as you sit down to study.
- Study by yourself and with others to encourage an exchange of ideas. Your study should focus on learning the principles and practices of clerical support services as well as gaining a broad understanding of the content areas listed in this syllabus.
- Develop your own illustrations and examples to check your understanding of a topic. Make sure you fully understand the basic terms for each content area. Create your own glossary of terms and look up any new words in a reference book.
- The test will contain items at various levels of ability. Consequently, it is important to be able to understand, apply, and analyze the material as you would on the job. Although all questions will be in a multiple-choice format, the items will be presented in a number of forms. For example, a written scenario may be followed by a series of three or four questions.
- Some test takers are anxious about taking tests and need to simulate the test-taking situation. If this is true for you, you may want to give yourself actual practice in a quiet, distraction-free environment.



General Strategies for Taking Written Tests

The basic format for this test is multiple-choice with four distinct choices. Here are some general hints for taking this type of test:

- Most importantly, the test is designed to have *only one answer that is the best from among the four choices given*.
- Your attitude about the test process can make a difference. Approach the test confidently. Arrive in plenty of time for the test so you do not feel rushed.
- Instructions read to you by the proctor are very important, so be sure to listen carefully. There may be helpful clues given during the proctor instructions. Ask questions if there is something you do not understand about the instructions, but be aware that your proctor cannot answer questions about test content.
- Read all directions carefully, twice if necessary. Each section of the test has specific directions. Read the directions for each section carefully. In many cases, test takers lose credits because they misread some important point in the given directions – Example: Select the sentence that is grammatically incorrect (instead of selecting the *correct* choice).
- Read each question carefully, making sure that you understand it before you answer. Reread it if necessary, but do not waste time on questions that seem too unfamiliar or difficult. Interpret words according to their generally accepted meanings. Rephrase or underline key words in difficult questions. Read each question carefully so you know what is being asked. The exam authors have tried to make the questions clear. No question is intended to be a "trick" or "catch" question.
- Your score on this test will be based only on the number of correct choices you make (the number of times you select the best choice from the four given). Guess if you are not sure. No penalty is given for guessing when these exams are scored. Therefore, it is better to guess than to omit an answer. Remember, this test does not penalize you for incorrect answers or guessing.
- Watch your time carefully during the test. Answer the easy questions first; postpone more difficult questions until later, making an initial guess in case you do not have enough time to go back to them.

Check your answers if you have time, but remember that your first response is often correct.

- If you feel an item is a problem, you may call it to your proctor's attention after the test is over. Any items brought to the attention of the proctor after the test will be carefully reviewed by subject matter experts and occupational testing specialists. Together, they review this information and often find that the candidate has just missed the point of the item. Try to focus on doing well on many items on the test rather than getting bogged down on just one item that counts as one point.
- Mark the answer sheet clearly. Remember, knowing the correct answer is not enough! If you do not mark the answer sheet correctly so that it can be machine-scored, you will not get credit for your answers. Answers marked only in your test book and not on your answer sheet will not be scored.
- Make sure that the number of the question in the test book matches the number of the question you are answering on the answer sheet. It is a good idea to check the numbers of questions and answers frequently. If you decide to skip a question, but fail to skip the matching answer blank for that question, all your answers after that could be wrong.
- Do not answer too fast. Do not place too much emphasis on speed. The time element is a factor, but it is not all-important. Accuracy should not be sacrificed for speed.



Examination Content Overview

The examination covers a wide range of clerical support services. The next section of this study guide provides information on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities covered by the test. The interrelated nature of the clerical field means that many questions will relate to more than one topic. The examination contains 145 questions, and you will have three hours to complete it.





Detailed Content Categories

Each section begins with a brief description of the content area. The specific content areas should be interpreted broadly. For example, “Ability to Alphabetize, File, and Code Information,” might have questions relating to filing names, numbers, and alpha-numeric messages.

1. ALPHABETIZE, FILE, AND CODE INFORMATION

This section is comprised of 25 questions. Major knowledge, skill, and ability areas include:

- Knowledge of the alphabet
- Knowledge of numbers
- Skill in alphabetizing

2. EDIT WRITTEN MATERIAL

This section is comprised of 25 questions. Major knowledge, skill, and ability areas include:

- Knowledge of rules of grammar
- Knowledge of punctuation
- Knowledge of the correct spelling of words
- Skill in identifying incorrect grammar
- Skill in identifying incorrect punctuation
- Skill in identifying incorrect spelling

3. VOCABULARY

This section is comprised of 20 questions. Major knowledge, skill, and ability areas include:

- Knowledge of vocabulary sufficient to create letters, memos, etc.
- Skill in appropriate use of vocabulary

4. MATH

This section is comprised of 20 questions. Major knowledge, skill, and ability areas include:

- Addition
- Subtraction
- Multiplication
- Division
- Decimals (including multiplication of decimals)
- Word Problems involving addition, subtraction, long division, multiplication, and averaging

5. READING COMPREHENSION

This section is comprised of 10 questions. Major knowledge, skill, and ability areas include:

- Knowledge of words and their generally accepted meanings
- Ability to read and understand written material

6. CUSTOMER SERVICE

This section is comprised of 15 questions. Major knowledge, skill, and ability areas include:

- Knowledge of the principles of good customer service
- Ability to communicate effectively with members of the public
- Knowledge of interpersonal relations
- Knowledge of phone etiquette

7. ADVANCED READING COMPREHENSION

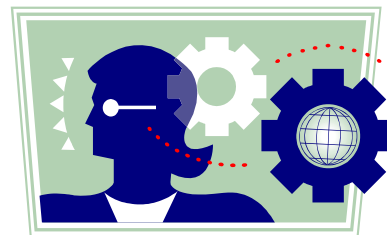
This section is comprised of 15 questions. Major knowledge, skill, and ability areas include:

- Knowledge of words and their generally accepted meanings
- Ability to read and understand material written at an advanced reading level

8. OFFICE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

This section is comprised of 15 questions. Major knowledge, skill, and ability areas include:

- Knowledge of typical office practices relating to standard methods of filing and categorization
- Knowledge of business correspondence
- Knowledge of report writing





Sample Questions

ALPHABETIZE, FILE, AND CODE INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS: Darken the box corresponding to the single best answer for each of the following questions.

1. Which name is third when filing alphabetically?

- a. Juan Perez
- b. Steven Pang
- c. Joseph Patata
- d. Amanda Perembo

2. If the dates below were filed chronologically beginning with the most recent date, which would be last?

- a. 04/15/00
- b. 01/29/99
- c. 02/02/00
- d. 12/01/99

Note: Questions in this section also include tables and graphs.

EDIT WRITTEN MATERIAL

Grammar

DIRECTIONS: The following item(s) are designed to measure your knowledge of grammar. For each item, select the sentence that is **grammatically incorrect**. Do not consider punctuation, spelling, or capitalization in these items.

- 3. a. To whom should I address this complaint about poor service?
- b. Who will explain the computer breakdown to Dr. Thong?
- c. Who do you wish to speak to about this surcharge?
- d. Whom were you talking about on the telephone?
- 4. a. Either Tom or Sherry should make the presentation.
- b. Neither Sherry nor Tom is qualified to make the presentation.
- c. If Tom does not make the presentation, Sherry will make it for him.
- d. Tom gave the presentation yesterday and wants to gave it again today.

Answers				
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Punctuation

DIRECTIONS: The following items are designed to measure your knowledge of punctuation. For each item, select the sentence that contains an **error in punctuation**. Mark the answer on your answer sheet.

- 5. a. If there is a problem, we should talk about it.
- b. There's not a problem that we should talk about now.
- c. Sometimes there are problems, that we should talk about.
- d. There are problems that we should talk about either today, tomorrow, or Wednesday.
- 6. a. Leave your belongings on the desk under the lamp in the next room.
- b. Please tell me your name, phone number, address, and Social Security number.
- c. If you can't keep your appointment on Monday, please reschedule it for later.
- d. Raise your hand when you are ready to begin the test, and we will give one to you.

Spelling

DIRECTIONS: The following items are designed to measure your ability to identify words that are spelled incorrectly. For each item, choose the one word that is not spelled correctly.

- 7. a. eradicate
- b. exacerbate
- c. accentuate
- d. accomodate

VOCABULARY

DIRECTIONS: The following items are designed to measure your vocabulary knowledge. For each of the capitalized words, select the one that best describes the meaning of that word.

- 8. STATUTE
 - a. law
 - b. book
 - c. judgment
 - d. piece of sculpture

9. HARASS

- a. thwart
- b. disturb
- c. comfort
- d. conform

MATH

DIRECTIONS: Darken the box corresponding to the single best answer for each of the following questions.

10. 4,590 divided by 30 equals

- a. 130
- b. 153
- c. 167
- d. 253

11. 8.54 multiplied by .73 equals

- a. 6.23
- b. 6.26
- c. 7.23
- d. 8.26

12. An office assistant working for \$8.00 an hour is paid time and one-half for all hours worked beyond 40 hours a week. If the assistant worked 45 hours a week, his total pay for that week is

- a. \$320
- b. \$380
- c. \$420
- d. \$540

13. A trial juror is paid a fee of \$15.00 per day of jury service plus a daily mileage reimbursement from home of \$0.15 per mile one way. What would be the total payment due to a juror who lives 17 miles from the courthouse and served on a 9-day trial?

- a. \$136.35
- b. \$137.55
- c. \$157.95
- d. \$180.90

READING COMPREHENSION

DIRECTIONS: The following questions are designed to measure your ability to read and understand written material. Each reading passage is followed by one or more questions about the material you have read. Base your answers only on the material you have read and not on any prior knowledge you may have.

Your ideal weight is not defined by tables or numbers. It is, very simply, the weight at which you look your best and feel wonderful. It is the weight at which you have energy, both mental and physical, and at which you rest well and get full value from your rest.

14. According to the above paragraph,

- a. getting enough sleep is important.
- b. you must use a chart to find your ideal weight.
- c. other people will tell you when you are overweight.
- d. ideal weight is determined by how your body feels.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

DIRECTIONS: Darken the box corresponding to the single best answer for each of the following questions.

15. The most effective way to secure information from a person who rambles is to

- a. ask him to be specific.
- b. ask questions requiring only "yes" or "no" answers.
- c. direct his train of thought by asking carefully worded questions.
- d. let him talk until finished, then explain what information you desire.

16. You are a new employee, alone in an office, and a customer comes in and demands an immediate solution to a problem you are not familiar with. You should

- a. ask her to wait until someone else comes in.
- b. ask her to come back when the supervisor is in.
- c. ask her to give you the facts, and you will take it up with the supervisor.
- d. use your imagination and try to give a logical explanation.

ADVANCED READING COMPREHENSION

DIRECTIONS: The following questions are designed to measure your ability to read and understand written material. Each reading passage is followed by one or more questions about the material you have read. Base your answers only on the material you have read and not on any prior knowledge you may have.

During the last several years, more and more research has been done on alcoholism in this society. Although figures vary, there is general agreement that there are upwards of ten million alcoholics in this country.

These people, as well as being victims themselves, have an adverse impact on those with whom they associate. Employers, relatives, friends, and families of alcoholics suffer from the effects of alcoholism. Relatives and friends are manipulated into making excuses and covering up for the alcoholic. The promises of reform, although short-lived, are believed because those who care want to believe them, and, as a result, they unknowingly become part of the disease pattern.

Those who are the closest suffer most of all. The family is affected when the employer has to terminate the alcoholic's services. The family is affected when the relatives and friends can no longer tolerate the consequences of the alcoholism and avoid the alcoholic and his family. The family is also directly affected by the alcoholic's behavior. Unable to counteract this without help, the family members get caught up in the consequences of the illness and often become emotionally ill themselves.

The bulk of popular interest has been with alcoholism, alcohol abuse, and alcoholics. Less attention has been paid to the family and, more specifically, to the children living in alcoholic homes.

17. According to the passage, who, besides the alcoholic, suffers from the effects of alcoholism?
- no one
 - only the employer
 - everyone who is near the alcoholic
 - only the family and friends who see the alcoholic every day
18. Popular interest in the past has mainly been concentrated on
- the alcoholic only.
 - the physical effects of alcohol.
 - the immediate family of the alcoholic.
 - how alcohol affects the work environment.

OFFICE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

DIRECTIONS: Darken the box corresponding to the single best answer for each of the following questions.

19. You are waiting for a call from a client to confirm receipt of a shipment. When the client does not call by the required date, you should
- call the client within 5 working days.
 - call the client and confirm receipt of the shipment.
 - assume he did not receive it and ship a new package.
 - assume that he received the shipment because you have not heard from him.
20. The most important factor to remember about writing memos is that they should
- be as brief as possible.
 - be phrased in acceptable English.
 - contain all necessary information.
 - not contain any personal opinions.

ANSWER KEY

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | d |
| 2 | b |
| 3 | c |
| 4 | d |
| 5 | c |
| 6 | a |
| 7 | d |
| 8 | a |
| 9 | b |
| 10 | b |
| 11 | a |
| 12 | b |
| 13 | c |
| 14 | d |
| 15 | c |
| 16 | c |
| 17 | c |
| 18 | a |
| 19 | b |
| 20 | c |



General Procedures

To be considered for hire by any member agency, you need to complete the appropriate employment application form. Do NOT send your application to CPS. If you successfully pass the minimum qualifications for the position for which you applied, the hiring agency will arrange for you to take the CTV exam. You will receive a scheduling notice from CPS with a date and time to take the exam. The letter is sent to you at least 14 days prior to your scheduled date. This is an important step in your hiring process and you must make every effort to make this appointment. Rescheduling is not allowed and you will be reported as a no-show to your hiring agency. Taking this examination does not automatically satisfy any requirements for unemployment insurance nor does it place you on an eligible list.

Your hiring agency will receive your scores after the closing date for the exam period. You will be notified by your hiring agency concerning further processing. You will **not** receive a copy of your scores or a certificate. The exam scores are valid for three years from the date you took the exam. If you apply for multiple positions, the hiring agency may authorize a retest, provided 6 months have passed since your last exam.

If you took the CTV exam **before July 1, 2004**, certificates are still available and your scores are still valid until the expiration date. If you apply to any agency, keep your original certificate and only submit a copy with your applications. Keep in mind that all member agencies from the original consortium (the City of Sacramento, Sacramento County, Sacramento Courts, and Sacramento Public Libraries) have access to your scores for exams taken prior to July 1, 2004. If you lose your certificate, you may obtain another from CPS for a \$5.00 fee, payable in the form of a money order only.

**If you have any questions regarding this examination, you may contact
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241 Lathrop Way
Sacramento, CA 95815
Telephone: (916) 263-3624 ext. 3080**



Reference List

The following references, documents, and guidelines will help you prepare for the examination. These recommended references were established by the members of the CTV Consortium.

What's the Rule? A Simple Guide to Perfect Punctuation. For orders or inquiries, please e-mail at order@whatstherule.com or call (916) 781-7557.

ARCO Teach Yourself to Pass Civil Service Exams
Shannon R. Turlington, Macmillan USA

ARCO Civil Service Arithmetic and Vocabulary
Barbara Erdsnecker, Margaret Haller, and Eve Steinberg
Macmillan USA

ARCO Clerical Exams
Eve Steinberg
Macmillan USA

ARCO Beginning Clerical Worker
John Czukor
Macmillan USA

Civil Service Career Starter
LearningExpress – New York

GOOD LUCK!

